



The Constitutional Judiciary Committee presents
Benchmarks: Raising the Bar on
Civics Education

Thursday, June 27, 2019, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

COURSE CLASSIFICATION: INTERMEDIATE

Course 3201

slyle@floridabar.org

OVERVIEW

Have you ever been asked to speak to a civic or community group – but didn't have time to put a presentation together?

No worries! Benchmarks has you covered!

Benchmarks is The Florida Bar program that takes presentations on the courts, the Constitution and the rule of law to adult civic and community groups. Surveys show many Americans lack a basic understanding of the three branches of government and how government works. Benchmarks teaches adults through presentations by attorneys to civic groups, clubs, religious institutions and associations.

At the Convention, the Benchmarks seminar will give an overview of this pioneering Florida Bar program, which been adopted in various forms by 10 other states. Once trained, attorneys can use the presentations found on The Florida Bar website when they are invited to speak to civic and community groups.

And there's more!! Attorneys can receive CLE credit for making Benchmarks presentations: 1 ethics credit hour for each presentation for up to three presentations in a three-year reporting period.

LECTURE PROGRAM

10:30 a.m. – 10:35 a.m.	Introductions and Overview <i>Judge Augustus Aikens, Constitutional Judiciary Committee Chair</i>
10:35 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.	Benchmarks Presentation <i>Annette Pitts</i> <i>Richard Levenstein</i>
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	What to do next? CLE Credits, Self-Reporting <i>All presenters</i>

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THE FLORIDA BAR

PRESENTERS



JUDGE AUGUSTUS DAVIS AIKENS, JR., chair of The Florida Bar's Constitutional Judiciary Committee, was appointed by Gov. Lawton Chiles to the Leon County Bench in December 1997 and has subsequently been re-elected. Following three years in private practice, Judge Aikens served as assistant general counsel for the Department of Administration in 1978, being promoted to general counsel in 1985. He also was the chief legal counsel for the Division of State Employees Insurance and Division of Retirement. Judge Aikens received the Bronze Star for his military service during Operation Desert Storm. Before retiring in 2003 from the Florida Army National Guard, he held the rank of colonel. Judge Aikens served as a military judge, judge advocate, battalion and brigade staff officer, company commander, and had numerous other assignments as a military police and field artillery officer. His last assignment was as staff judge advocate, State Area Command, and Florida Army National Guard. Judge Aikens received the Legion of Merit Medal. He is assigned to handle all Veteran Court cases by Administrative Order 2014-05, Sixth Amendment, effective July 1, 2015.



ANNETTE PITTS is founding executive director of the Florida Law Related Education Association Inc., a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that for more than 30 years has advanced law related and civic education in Florida's K-12 public schools and adult education forums. She is also director of the Justice Teaching Center for Civic Learning at Florida Southern College. In 2014, she was recognized by the National Center for State Courts with the Sandra Day O'Connor Award for Advancements in Civic Education. The award honors an organization, court or individual who has promoted, inspired, improved or led an innovation or accomplishment in the field of civics education related to the justice system. Pitts is the principal author of The Florida Bar Benchmarks program under the direction of the Constitutional Judiciary Committee. She is recognized nationally and internationally for her innovative justice education programs. She has trained in more than 25 countries to advance education for democracy efforts. Pitts was instrumental in advancing civics instruction in Florida's middle schools. She has also assisted the Florida Supreme Court in implementing an annual teachers' institute as well as a high school moot court competition.



RICHARD LEVENSTEIN is a shareholder at the law firm of Nason Yeager in Palm Beach Gardens, specializing in health care and business litigation, and has been board certified in the specialty of Business Litigation by The Florida Bar since 2002. Levenstein served two terms on the Board of Trustees of the American Inns of Court Foundation and served as secretary of the American Judicature Society. He was the founding president of the Justice Major B. Harding American Inn of Court in Stuart, and currently serves on its Executive Committee. Additionally he is a member of the Lawyers Committee of the National Center for State Courts. In 2012, Levenstein received the Attorney of the Year Award from the Florida Law Related Education Association. An adjunct professor of law at Tulane University School of Law, Levenstein is a returning member to the Constitutional Judiciary Committee and devotes significant time to improving the public's awareness of the importance of a fair, impartial and independent judicial branch. Along with Annette Pitts, he is co-developer of The Florida Bar Benchmarks program.

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CLE Credit

General: 1.5 hours

